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Editorial Notes and Comment



THE twenty-fifth annual Southern Students' Conference will be held at Blue Ridge, N. C., beginning June 16th. The gathering of these choice young people from the educational institutions of the South means a great deal for them as individuals. It means much for the spiritual life of the institutions from which they come. It means much for the advancement of the Master's work. If there are students who ought to go and who cannot provide the cost, will not other Christians see that necessary means are provided? It will be a good investment.

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CANADIAN Presbyterianism is not having the smooth sailing in the matter of union with the Congregational and Methodist churches that was predicted in the beginning. It seems that probably a majority of the Presbyteries will vote in favor of union, but a large minority will oppose it. These, it is said, will not go into the union. Both sides express themselves as anxious to preserve peace and harmony. In order to accomplish this it is now proposed to adopt some "plan of separation," by which the "unionists" and "non-unionists" can divide the property in which both parties are interested. It is hard for us to see what Presbyterians will gain by leaving Presbyterians to join with other denominations. If the movement were at all unanimous there might be something said in favor of it. As it is, the number of denominations will not be diminished, and one, which has done as much for Canada and the world as any other, will be very much weakened.

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MINISTERIAL RELIEF is a cause that ought to appeal to every true child of God. A short time ago a man said of another: "I will do anything I can for him, for he has done a great deal for me in the past." Christian, think what the minister has done for you. He has been the leader in all the work of the Church. He, by his work and preaching, has preserved and advanced the life of your particular church. Without him, in all probability, it would have been closed up long ago. To you personally he has been your lifelong friend. He baptized you as an infant in your mother's arms, he preached the gospel of salvation to you and taught you during your growing years. He received you into the church. He joined you in marriage to her who has been the joy of your life. He has been with you in times of joy and in times of sorrow. By his words and his prayers he has brought comfort in your affliction. He has preached to you the gospel of cheer and inspiration and hope. What he has done for you he is doing and will do for your children, on through the generations to come. Shall he

be given what is needed to comfort him in his declining years? Or shall his wearied and worn out body and mind be allowed to suffer, while his heart cries out to God for release? Liberal gifts to the annual expense fund and to the endowment fund for Ministerial Relief will settle these questions as they ought to be answered.

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THE churches are more and more awakening to the idea that the Lord's work ought to be done on business principles. Among other ways in which this is being shown is the better equipment being furnished the pastor by some of the churches. Business men are beginning to realize more than formerly the value of pastoral work of all kinds, and they are beginning to find out something of the volume of this work. And so some pastors are being furnished with secretaries and automobiles, not that they may be relieved of work, but that they may do more and better work. No corporation which pays its manager a salary of three or four thousand dollars a year would expect him to do all the routine work of the office when a secretary could be secured to do a great part of the work for fifty or sixty dollars a month, leaving the manager time to attend to important matters. The same principles apply in the case of a pastor. Why should he take time to attend to the thousand and one details of his work which a secretary could attend to just as well? Many a sermon has been spoiled by the ringing of a telephone which another could have answered just as well. Similar advantages come from the possession of an automobile. Business men think about these things.

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A CHRISTIAN woman writes that on account of the war she has had to sacrifice some things, but does not want the Lord's work to suffer from lack of any sacrifice she can make and sends her usual contribution to one of the Church's missionary agencies. This is the true Christian spirit. If all of God's people were imbued with the same spirit there would be no lack of means to do the Lord's work.

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THE horrors of the European war cannot be exaggerated. But even this dark war cloud has its brighter side. Men and women in the war-swept countries are being brought nearer to God than ever before. A Belgian lady, a refugee in England, said: "I have lost everything; my house is burned; all my belongings have been taken away. I am here an exile, but I don't regret all these losses, for I have found a greater treasure—the gospel of Christ."

LORD'S Day Sunday may seem to be a strange form of expression. But it is well to have a day when all the Church has its attention drawn to the Sabbath, its divine origin, the laws governing its observance, the way in which these laws are being violated. Christian people should have their pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance as to the value of the Sabbath properly observed to them, to the Church and to the country. The first Sunday in May has been suggested as a day in which the Sabbath should be the special object of study and meditation. It has been often and truly said that the Christian religion is dependent upon the Sabbath. Therefore this inestimable treasure should be most carefully preserved.

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A GOOD year, is the tone of the reports from the Executive Committees, so far as they have been sent out. Last year started with very poor prospects in many respects. Besides local conditions in many sections the whole country was just beginning to feel the real effect of the European war. Business conditions were entirely unsettled. Prices of necessities were going up. Nobody knew just what was ahead. But God's people did not give up their interest in His work. Reports from all over the Church indicate that gifts to the service of God have been greater than ever. The work of Home and Foreign Missions has been carried on economically and without the expansion that ought to have been made, but in each case the work of the year has been paid for by the contributions received.

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REJOICING in the blessings of God which enabled His people to provide the means of carrying on His work without debt during the past year, let us begin the new Church year with the determination that, with God's continued help, we will do even more this year. The opportunities for work have never been as great. The growing prosperity of this country is providing opportunities for opening missions and establishing new churches, which in a little while will become self-supporting. And let us not forget to be ready for the multitudes of foreigners who will come to this country after the war is over, when they compare its prosperity with their own despoiled and desolate lands. In the foreign fields the work being done is producing marvelous results. And the cries that are coming to us from missionaries and natives is pathetic in the extreme. By a united, consecrated effort God's people can wipe out all the debts and make the advances needed in the great work of the Master. It may require sacrifice, but is it not worth it?